

## Mount Green Housing Association Involvement Policy – 2009

### Introduction

The former Housing Corporation require all social landlords to prepare and publish an Involvement Policy Statement, which sets out the aims and objectives for involving residents in improving the housing associations services. The Tenants Services Authority have not yet confirmed their requirements and aims for resident involvement but these are expected to be published later in the year. This document sets out MGHA's aims and objectives for resident involvement.

### Our Commitment

MGHA is committed to ensuring that residents of its properties have access to a range of opportunities for participation and have real influence in the management of their homes, and the local community, governance of the association and the development of its services.

The Association will ensure equality of opportunity for all residents, whatever their race, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

In addition the Association will encourage the development of local initiatives to improve the quality of life of the people or community we serve.

As a demonstration of our commitment, we employ the services of a dedicated Housing Manager (Community Engagement) whose responsibilities include implementing this policy and monitoring the outcomes.

### Our aims

By involving residents in all areas of the Associations work we aim to:

- provide services that residents realistically want
- enable all groups of residents to have the opportunity to become involved and influence the decisions made by the Association
- bring about continuous improvement of our services, to benefit all residents

### How will we achieve this?

Our Involvement Policy sets out what our tenants can expect in terms of opportunities for involvement. The policy underlines our commitment to:

### Provide information in the form of:

- Magazines
- Website
- Written correspondence
- Residents meetings

- Tenants handbook
- Residents conference
- Residents Forum

**Consult and Involve residents on:**

- Matters of housing management
- Service provision
- Priorities for improvement
- Design of new property, reinvestment and cyclical and day to day maintenance programmes

**Enable residents to influence decisions and services provided by the Association by:**

- Providing the processes for resident involvement throughout the organisation
- Provide and support formal mechanisms such as Residents Associations, residents groups, the Residents Forum and Board membership
- Provide feedback, both in terms of responses and outcomes
- Monitor, measure and review the success of all resident involvement activities

**Where residents express a desire to improve an aspect of their community, MGHA will:**

- Identify the project within its own business/corporate plan
- Consider funding support, finance or in-kind
- Link with appropriate agencies
- Support fundraising
- Support a consultation process with those affected by the project

**What residents can expect**

In order to ensure that all groups are able and encouraged to participate and have influence in the management of the Association, at a variety of levels, MGHA will:

- Provide information in plain English with translations on request, and in a format that is most suited to the individuals needs
- Seek to increase the level of participation of those under represented, such as those in sheltered accommodation, leaseholders, disabled, single parents, black and minority ethnic groups, rural communities and individual street properties.
- Arrange meetings at a time and location best suited to our residents
- Provide training for residents to ensure that they have the necessary skills to participate at their chosen level
- Provide a range of opportunities and methods for involvement, both formal and informal
- Enable residents to have real influence in setting priorities
- Seek the views of residents regarding the services provided and issues related to housing management
- Demonstrate how residents participation has influenced outcomes

**We will achieve this by:**

- Providing a regular periodic resident magazine
- Providing a Residents Annual Report that is relevant to our residents

- Ensuring an officer shall attend, where invited, any resident meeting where a significant and/or critical issue is to be discussed
- Identify innovative ways of communicating to our residents
- Seek the help of outside agencies in order to overcome barriers to services, such as Language Line for people with English as their second language
- Completing a Residents Satisfaction survey at least every three years
- Conducting Satisfaction Surveys on particular issues such as modernisation, repairs etc
- Holding workshops to seek views of residents on service delivery
- Involving residents in the monitoring of performance in key areas such as day to day repairs, individual estates services and allocations
- Ensuring all estate inspections are recorded and time targets are set for all actions identified from the inspections
- Involving residents in the selection of contractors
- Involving residents in the recruitment of particular front line posts
- Consulting on all projects regarding redevelopment and refurbishment
- Encouraging and supporting formal methods of involvement through funding, staff resources and mechanisms to ensure consultation is able to effect outcomes

### **Monitoring and ensuring involvement affects outcomes**

It is important that we monitor involvement activities and can demonstrate how they have influenced outcomes, enhanced accountability to our residents and improved services.

A record of all involvement activities will be kept, using the record of resident involvement procedure.

Members of staff will agree, in consultation with the Housing Manager (Community Engagement) timescales for reviewing all activities to ensure objectives are achieved, measure how resident involvement has influenced services provided, and identify how the activity satisfies the requirements of the Audit Commissions Key Lines of Enquiry No. 5 – Resident Involvement.

### **Review Process for this Policy Statement**

We recognise the importance for this procedure of reviewing the Involvement Policy Statement and Involvement Action Plan.

The Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed annually, in partnership with the Residents Forum and the Housing Manager (Community Engagement). The review will be timed to ensure funding requirements are accounted for when setting budgets for the following year.

The Involvement Policy will also be reviewed annually by the Board.